



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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**DLNR RECEIVES \$2.1 MILLION IN FEDERAL RECOVERY LAND ACQUISITION
GRANTS TO SUPPORT ENDANGERED SPECIES CONSERVATION**

HONOLULU – The State of Hawai‘i was awarded \$2,101,196 under the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund Federal Recovery Land Acquisition Grants program.

Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced the award of more than \$57.9 million in grants through the fund to 23 states and one territory to support conservation planning and acquisition of vital habitat for threatened and endangered fish, wildlife and plants.

This funding will be used to acquire a total of 4,198 acres on the islands of Hawai‘i and O‘ahu protecting coastal and forest habitats, wetlands and watersheds.

“Endangered sea turtle nesting areas, forest habitat for over 90 rare species including the largest known population of ‘Elepaio in the Wai‘anae mountains, and wetlands and watershed that are home to endangered Hawaiian waterbirds and native plants will all be protected with the help of these federal funds,” said Laura H. Thielen, DLNR chairperson.

“The support from the U.S. Department of the Interior demonstrates the great coordination we have achieved between conservation partners, state, federal and county agencies here in the state of Hawai‘i,” said Thielen.

Authorized by Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act, these grants enable states to work with private landowners, conservation groups and other agencies to initiate conservation planning efforts and acquire and protect habitat to support the conservation of threatened and endangered species.

This year, the Cooperative Endangered Species Fund provided states \$8.6 million through the Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants Program, \$35.3 million through the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Grants Program and \$14 million through the Recovery Land

Acquisition Grants Program, which includes approximately \$1.5 million of funds carried over from previous years or recovered from previous projects. The three programs were established to help avoid potential conflicts between the conservation of threatened and endangered species and land development and use.

The Recovery Land Acquisition Grants Program provides funds to states and territories to acquire habitat for endangered and threatened species with approved recovery plans. Habitat acquisition to secure long term protection is often an essential element of a comprehensive recovery effort for a listed species.

DLNR will receive its funding through the Recovery Land Acquisition Grants Program for the following projects:

Kawa Bay Acquisition - \$1,000,000. DLNR will provide a grant to the County of Hawai'i to acquire and permanently protect approximately 551 acres in the district of Ka'u along the southeast coast of the island of Hawai'i. The property provides approximately two miles of pristine coastline containing nesting beaches for the endangered Hawaiian hawksbill turtle and protecting offshore feeding areas for the threatened green sea turtle. It will connect other recent County acquisitions at Honu'apo Bay, and state owned property, to connect four to five miles of coastline makai of the highway. The protection of this property will also benefit tidepools, coral reefs, an intertidal brackish water pond, and coastal freshwater springs which provide habitat for the endangered Hawaiian coot and the orange-black Hawaiian damselfly, a candidate species.

The County of Hawai'i has also applied for \$1.5 million in funding from the State Legacy Lands Act program. The Legacy Lands Commission rated this project as its number one priority (tied with another project) and is recommending it for funding to the State Board of Land and Natural Resources. Hawai'i County will be tapping approximately \$3.5 million from its open space fund to complete the estimated \$6 million purchase. The Trust for Public Land's Hawaiian Islands Program has and is providing the County with technical assistance in the grant-writing and acquisition phases of the property.

Honouliuli Preserve Acquisition - \$361,196. This funding will contribute toward the acquisition and permanent protection of the 3,582-acre Honouliuli preserve, in the 'Ewa district of O'ahu. The Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife, The Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, and the Department of the Army are working to raise funding toward the acquisition of this area, which will permanently protect habitat for over 90 rare species, including 38 threatened and endangered plants, one endangered bird, one endangered pomace fly and two endangered tree snails (including the famed singing *kahuli* snail). There are 15 species (four of them endangered) that can only be found on the Honouliuli parcel. The area represents the largest known population of 'elepaio in the Wai'anae Mountains and the second largest on the Island of O'ahu.

Hamakua Marsh Watershed Acquisition - \$740,000. The goal of the Hamakua Marsh Watershed acquisition project is to acquire and permanently protect 65 acres of wetland and watershed lands and add them to the existing Hamakua Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary in windward O'ahu, which is administered by the Department Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife. This acquisition will enhance ongoing recovery efforts for endangered Hawaiian waterbirds and plant species in the Hamakua Marsh. Species benefited include Hawaiian stilt, Hawaiian coot, Hawaiian gallinule, Hawaiian duck, and the federally listed sedge

Cyperus trachysanthos. Partners in the protection and restoration of this area include the Hamakua Marsh Ecosystem Restoration and Community Development Project and the Hawai'i Chapter of the Wildlife Society.

For a complete list of the 2008 grant awards for these programs (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 15.615), see the Service's Endangered Species Grants home page at <http://endangered.fws.gov/grants/section6/index.html>.

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